



Curatorial Safety

Does Your Park Have an Emergency Operations Plan?

No matter what time of year, it's always "disaster season" somewhere in the country. Natural disasters such as tornados, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, and wildfires, as well as structural fires, accidents, and crime, can injure staff and visitors, and damage or destroy collections, historic structures, and other park resources. Disasters do happen without warning, as evidenced by the September 2002 fire that destroyed Arlington, a circa 1818 Natchez, Mississippi mansion.

Does your park have an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to deal with such crises? If so, is it up to date? Does it include all relevant information pertaining to the protection of the museum collection and associated cultural and natural resources? If you answered no to any of these questions then it's time to begin planning and programming for an EOP. NPS *Management Policies* (2001) 8.2.5.2 "Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Operations" requires each park to develop an Emergency Operations Plan "to ensure an effective response to all types of emergencies that can be reasonably anticipated." NPS Museum Checklist question E8 relates to the park's EOP as well. If your park does not have an Emergency Operations Plan or if your EOP does not include information concerning the museum collection, you can request Museum Collection Preservation and Protection (MCPP) program funds to correct this deficiency.

For information concerning Emergency Operations Plans see the NPS *Museum Handbook*, Part I, Chapter 10: Emergency Planning, on the web at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/publications/MHI/mushbkl.html>. Contact your Regional Curator for assistance in revising or initiating an Emergency Operations Plan. Other individuals and organizations that you can contact for help include:

Park staff: your park's EOP Coordinator, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), Chief Ranger and law enforcement staff, Safety Officer, maintenance staff, and structural and wildland fire teams

Local Agencies: county emergency preparedness office, police, fire, and EMT personnel

State Agencies: emergency preparedness/Civil Defense office, state police, and state fire marshal

Federal Agencies: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) <http://www.fema.gov>, Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.epa.gov>, Coast Guard <http://www.uscg.mil>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov>, and local Department of Defense facilities

Nonprofit Organizations: National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) <http://www.nfpa.org>, American Society for Industrial Security International (ASIS) <http://www.asisonline.org>, and the International Foundation for Cultural Property Protection (IFCPP) <http://www.ifcpp.org>

You might also want to contact other parks and museums in your area for help; perhaps they have contingency plans applicable to your situation as well.

Resources in Print

Bennett, K. Sharon (ed.). *SEMC Disaster Response Handbook*. Baton Rouge: The Southeastern Museums Conference (2000). Available for \$40.00 (\$35.00 for members) from the Southeastern Museums Conference, PO Box 9003, Atlanta, GA 31106, (404) 378-3153.

Dorge, Valerie and Sharon L. Jones (comps.). *Building An Emergency Plan: A Guide For Museums and Other Cultural Institutions*. Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute (1999). Available for \$39.95 from the Getty Bookstore, (800) 223-3431, <http://www.getty.edu/bookstore/titles/emerg.html>.

Layne, Stevan P. *The Cultural Property Protection Manual*. Denver: Layne Consultants International (2002). Available for \$25.00 from the International Foundation for Cultural Property Protection (IFCPP), (800) 257-6717, <http://www.ifcpp.org>.

Lewis, Steve. *Disaster Recovery Yellow Pages*. Newton, MA: Systems Audit Group, Inc. (2002). Available in either print or CD-Rom format for \$98.00 from Systems Audit Group Inc., 25 Ellison Road, Newton, MA 02459, (617) 332-3496, <http://www.disaster-help.com>.

National Park Service, Museum Management Program. *Primer on Disaster Preparedness, Management, and Response*. Washington, DC: National Park Service (1993). Available on the web at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/publications/primer/primintro.html>.

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